

PRESS RELEASE

Scientific evidence proves mechanically butchered meat 'is meat'

23 May, 2016: Following a landmark High Court ruling, Leatherhead Food Research says that more sophisticated analysis is required for meat harvested using advanced mechanical butchery technologies.

Microscopy performed by Leatherhead Food Research was pivotal to the recent case which ruled in favour of meat processor Newby Foods. Leatherhead was called to act as an expert witness, being the UK's only UKAS accredited laboratory for muscle fibre structure analysis to determine the quality of mechanically separated meat.

Leatherhead's analysis demonstrated that the muscle fibre structure of chicken and pork harvested via Newby Foods' unique process was consistent with 'fresh meat'. This led the judge to conclude that the meat was not mechanically separated meat, enabling it to contribute to the labelled meat content of end products.

The performance of butchery machines is improving, and in some cases this enables residual meat to be harvested with little damage to the muscle structure. Such developments play a vital role in the food industry, enhancing cost-effectiveness, reducing food waste and safeguarding the environment which is fundamental to European Legislation.

Newby Foods' Managing Director Graham Bishop says: "The 'Leatherhead method' of analysis was directly referred to by Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart in the final ruling. It proved beyond doubt that our meat has the properties of standard fresh meat, not mechanically separated meat."

Head of Microscopy at Leatherhead Food Research, Professor Kathy Groves, handled the Newby Foods project. She explains: "Our evaluation of Newby Foods' samples involved detailed microstructural analysis. In all cases, the muscle fibre structures were almost completely intact, just as you would expect to see with fresh meat. The technique we used could enhance food manufacturers' incoming quality inspections for products where the inclusion of mechanically butchered meat is acceptable, but mechanically separated meat is not."

The Newby Foods case underlines the complexity of contemporary meat processing and classification. Food manufacturers need to consider many conflicting factors when developing meat products. To help the industry navigate these intricacies, Leatherhead has launched a White Paper: *How much meat is in your sausage?* Giving practical guidance on how manufacturers can balance regulatory requirements, cost implications and the consumer sensory experience, it is available to download at <http://bit.ly/1SUCu5L>.

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Melissa Shone
Director of Marketing, Science Group plc
T: +44 1223 875205
E: melissa.shone@sciencegroup.com

Notes to editors:

About Leatherhead Food Research

Founded in 1919, Leatherhead Food Research has been a trusted partner to the food industry for nearly a century, offering an unparalleled breadth and depth of experience to help food and beverage companies, large and small, innovate and succeed. Covering the full product lifecycle, services range from offerings such as consumer insight, sensory testing and ground-breaking ingredient and product innovation to expert advisory work around food safety and global industry regulations. Leatherhead also operates an internationally recognised membership programme which represents a who's who of the food and drinks industry. Alongside Member support and project work, Leatherhead's industry professionals deliver cutting-edge research in areas that stimulate long term commercial benefit and growth for the food and drink industry.

Leatherhead Food Research is the trading name of Leatherhead Research Limited, a Science Group (AIM:SAG) company. Science Group provides independent advisory and leading-edge product development services focused on the Group's in-depth science and technology capability. It has six offices globally, two dedicated, UK-based R&D innovation centres and more than 350 employees. Other Science Group companies include Oakland Innovation, Sagentia and OTM Consulting.

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